

## **UNDAUNTED STEWARDSHIP®**

### **PURPOSE OF THE BRIEFING DOCUMENT:**

Provide a status update on the Undaunted Stewardship® Program

### **ISSUES:**

Undaunted Stewardship® received earmarked, pass-through funding from the BLM during fiscal years 2001-2006. However, no funding was earmarked for the program in 2007 or 2008 and future funding remains uncertain. The Undaunted Stewardship® Executive Council is pursuing other potential funding sources for the long term continuation of the program. The program is now operating and completing projects with funds remaining from previous allocations.

### **Background:**

Undaunted Stewardship® is a cooperative program directed jointly by federal, state and private agencies, with guidance from statewide historic, conservation, and agricultural groups. Undaunted Stewardship® is guided by the Executive Council, which includes representatives from the Montana Stockgrowers Association, Montana State University, and Montana BLM.

The concept for this program came from Montana's ranching and agricultural community. It was initiated to recognize the stewardship of private landowners that has resulted in many areas along the Lewis and Clark Trail remaining undeveloped and closely resembling what Lewis and Clark saw during their expedition through the state. The program works to preserve and improve landscapes and communities along the Lewis and Clark Trail in Montana. This is accomplished by developing on-the-ground projects with private landowners that will further enhance the natural resources along the trail, such as grazing management plans, a ranch certification program, and interpretive kiosks.

Funding for the program results in improved ranching and land management practices on private property along the Lewis and Clark Trail. Undaunted Stewardship® provides benefits to visitors on public lands through the development of wayside interpretive exhibits and trails. A 2007 project developed an interpretive trail at the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument Interpretive Center in Fort Benton and will install five interpretive panels in 2008. Project plans for 2008 include continuing the Undaunted Land Steward Certification program, public education and outreach activities, and photo monitoring of selected ranches.

The Undaunted Stewardship® program received the 2007 Western Extension Directors Award of Excellence on July 17, 2007. Given by the extension directors from land-grant universities in the western United States, the award recognized the program as a nationally unique partnership that preserves and improves landscapes and communities along the Lewis and Clark Trail in Montana. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation recognized the Undaunted Stewardship® program with the Chairman's Award for Federal Achievement in Historic Preservation. The award, presented in Annapolis, Md., on May 18, 2005, cited Undaunted Stewardship® as a "wonderful model for similar partnerships across the Nation."

### **MAIN DECISION OR MESSAGE:**

This partnership has generated many positive results, benefitting the local ranching communities, Montana residents and the visiting public. The Montana Stockgrowers Association was instrumental in obtaining the previous Undaunted Stewardship appropriations and serves on the executive council. Several conservation groups are involved in the process and offer advice concerning projects along the Missouri and other rivers and streams along the Lewis and Clark Trail. Montana State University is providing outreach and research and science assistance for project development and implementation. It is also assisting private landowners in developing management strategies. Although Undaunted Stewardship® funding comes to Montana BLM, it is essentially pass-through funding. Future funding for the program is uncertain.

### **BUREAU PERSPECTIVE:**

Public support for the Undaunted Stewardship® program is high. It is an outstanding example of cooperative conservation that will continue to benefit private and public cultural and natural resources for years to come.

### **CONTACT:**

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